

THE INDYPENDENT

LIVE FROM BAGHDAD: Eyewitness reports on the ground in Iraq

Members of the Iraq Peace Team (www.iraq-peace-team.org) have been living on the ground with Iraqis since 2002. Many have decided to stay in Baghdad despite the U.S. invasion. Here are some of their most recent reports.

March 19 – Ramzi Kysia

Wednesday had a very strange feel to it. Everything was very slow, very easy. Not too much traffic. It was as if you're living somewhere in the United States and the weather reports are saying there's about to be a hurricane and people are just going about their business preparing for it. No panic. But you saw people taping up their windows, getting supplies, just trying to get ready for what was about to happen.

March 20 – Bettejo Passalacqua

We were prepared for the bombing to begin Thursday at around 4 am. We congregated together until around midnight when we heard that a sandstorm had grounded the military planes and the invasion would be called off. Then at 3 am we received word from the States that the planes were on the way. Some went to the shelter, some remained together in rooms. Cathy B., Kathy K. and I were sitting in KK's room at 5:30 am when someone said that if it didn't come by dawn, it wouldn't come tonight. Cathy B. said, "Well, dawn is here, so I guess we can go back to bed." Then came the first explosion. The attack lasted about one and a half hours. Two explosions rocked our building, but they were pretty far away, I think.

Later Cathy B. and I went to the hospital to see if there were any kids left to do arts and crafts. The hospital ward where I had been working was entirely emptied. Even the sound of the children crying as they did when given IV infusions would have been a welcome sound to drown out the ghastly silence.

But even the silence was eclipsed by the scene I encountered when I walked into the hospital. There is a very long and wide corridor one passes through to get to the steps to the wards. The corridor was lined with empty beds (at least 20 on either side) awaiting war casualties. All these empty beds on wards which should be filled with children being treated so that they might live. How backwards war makes our world.

March 22 – Kathy Kelly

Here in Baghdad, along the Tigris River, a gentle dawn and the sweetest of birdsongs were more precious than ever following a horrific night of intense bombardment. With the calm morning came relief after learning that the families of friends who work at the hotel are okay.

Abu Hassan, a pro at charades, pantomimed what happened in his home. He pointed to the windows in my room, held up five fingers, touched the floor and then affirmed, "Finished." Five windows had shattered. Then he swung his arms around to imitate a ceiling fan, also "finished"—it had crashed to the floor. Next he crouched down with his hands on his head to indicate what the children had done. Riyadh then told us that his brother and father were "finished" in the 1991 Gulf War—making a gesture of falling asleep, which meant that both had been killed during the war, and then he mimicked wiping tears from his eyes to explain that his mother had wept through the night.

As I write, I can hear explosions in the distance. Clouds of smoke are billowing in every direction. We've heard that last night's casualty list includes 207 wounded, four of whom died in hospitals. News reports say that more than 1,000 Cruise missiles were launched last night, and the US may be planning to release many more tonight. On a beautiful spring day, welcome to hell.

—compiled by Jessica Stein

PUSHING FOR PEACE IN THE FACE OF WAR

See inside for the latest on the peace movement, domestic detentions, media self-censorship, chaos at the UN, and more...

BREAKING NEWS:

Nonviolent civil disobedience planned for NYC on Thu., Mar. 27

"No Business as Usual" is the call from an ad-hoc coalition of anti-war groups hoping to shut down the city on Thursday, March 27. The plan calls for a massive die-in on 5th Avenue at Rockefeller Center, followed by spontaneous acts of civil disobedience by affinity groups throughout the city.

The planned day of action was a product of a meeting attended by hundreds

of anti-war activists from different groups on Sunday, Mar. 23. It follows the examples of San Francisco where anti-war protestors have repeatedly disrupted traffic with acts of civil disobedience in the days since the war started.

The Rockefeller Center area was chosen because it is home to many of the city's large corporations and media organizations, which activists say are

promoting and profiting from the war. There will also be space for a legal protest at the Rockefeller Center action.

A website for the action has been established at www.M27coalition.org. A pre-action meeting is planned for Wednesday evening, Mar. 26, location to be announced.

For more information, go to www.m27coalition.org

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What is the IMC?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the three-year-old Independent Media Center has become an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and eco-systems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate.

Unlike corporate media, we espouse open dialogue, and the importance of placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The *Independent* is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants, and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions. All reporting is done by NYC IMC volunteers unless otherwise noted.

What can I do to get involved?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for the *Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

Volunteer staff:

Chris Anderson, Silvia Arana, Eulan Atkinson, Leigh Benzaia, Mike Burke, Katherine A. Carlson, Sina Choi, Ellen Davidson, Liz Dresner, Miguel Erb, A.K. Gupta, Pandi Hopkins, Kristen McLeod-Ball, F. Timothy Martin, Sasha Nevskeya, Donald Paneth, Patti Pardini, Kara Piccirilli, Mark Pickens, Emily Reinhardt, Thomas Ross, Greg J. Ocz, Bert Picard, Jessica Stein, Jeanne Strole, Catriona Stuart, John Tarleton.

Be the media: nyc.indymedia.org

THE WAR AT HOME...

Domestic repression increases

BY MIKE BURKE

As the bombs began to drop on Baghdad, the war at home intensified with the threat of martial law, the possible arrest of 7,000 Iraqis and the indefinite detention of asylum seekers from Arab and Muslim nations.

In New Jersey a top law enforcement agent has warned the nation could be put under martial law if the Department of Homeland Security deems a threat is imminent.

"If the nation escalates to red alert, which is the highest in the color-coded readiness against terror, you will be assumed by authorities to be the enemy if you so much as venture outside your home... A red alert would also tear away virtually all personal freedoms to move about and associate," reported the New Jersey *Courier Post*.

New Jersey's counterterrorism director Sidney Caspersen continued, "What we're saying is, 'Everybody sit down.' If you are left standing, you are probably a terrorist."

With the country now on Orange alert, the main targets appear to be Iraqi-Americans and other foreign-born individuals from Muslim and Arab nations.

CNN reported Iraqi Americans are being arrested for their political beliefs.

"Dozens of Iraqis in at least five United States cities thought to be sympathetic to Saddam Hussein's regime will be detained because war is imminent," reported Larry King on March 18.

Three days later the *Miami Herald* reported, "Citing wartime security concerns, teams of federal agents fanned out Thursday across the United States to arrest Iraqis who are in the country illegally. Between 3,000 and 7,000 Iraqis nationwide... are targeted for

arrest."

On March 18, the Department of Homeland Security unveiled Operation Liberty Shield purportedly to offer a "comprehensive national plan designed to increase protection for U.S. citizens and the U.S. infrastructure."

One provision mandates the detention of asylum seekers from 34 other Arab and Muslim countries.

Amnesty International condemned the measure.

"Operation Liberty Shield denies liberty to the victims of human rights abuse who come to our country seeking freedom," said Amnesty Executive Director William Schulz. "Liberty from unwarranted detention is a hallmark of a free society. To name an operation that denies liberty to asylum

seekers 'liberty shield' is Orwellian."

And the U.S.-Canadian border has been swamped with thousands of Pakistanis who are attempting to flee the U.S. out of fear they would be detained and deported. Hundreds remain stranded along the border because Canadian officials cannot handle the increased workload.

Men from Pakistan faced a March 21 deadline to register with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service under a new program that tracks men from Arab and Muslim nations.

Since December, a total of 55,000 immigrants in the United States have registered. And the Justice Department detained nearly 1,800 of those who voluntarily met with government officials. Another 5,600 have been given deportation orders.



ROUNDUP: Outside Federal Building in New York on Jan. 10, the last day for men from 16 nations to register with the INS. PHOTO: FRED ASKEW

Pop stars sound off with anti-war tunes

BY EMILY REINHARDT

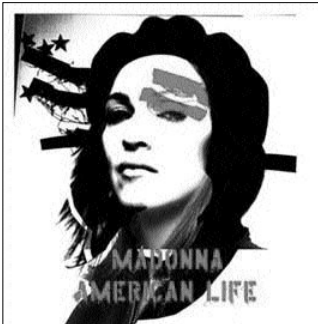
Music is supposed to soothe the savage beast. But America's savage beasts in Washington probably aren't jamming right now to Bob Dylan's "Masters of War" or Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On?" George Bush probably has the ubiquitous Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." on repeat in the stereo.

But for the activist's listening pleasure, there are multiple new anti-war songs from some very unlikely sources. The old school Vietnam-era tunes, from Edwin Starr's "War" to John Lennon's "Give Peace A Chance" are joined by the likes of Madonna, John Mellencamp and the Beastie Boys. Others like Sheryl Crow and Bruce Springsteen have given verbal support to the anti-war movement.

One old school player who's returned from retirement is Cat Stevens, now known as Yusuf Islam. He recently re-recorded his mellow seventies hit "Peace Train" and a new track, "Angel of War."

As Islam states on his website, "As a singer who sprang from a generation of highly idealistic free spirits between the 60's and 70's, I like to think the songs I wrote somehow held up an altruistic mirror to our planet's time and era. Though times have changed, it's a nice surprise to see that youthful feeling of anti-war sentiment returning once more to the cobbled main streets of Europe."

One artist that will never be confused with Yusuf Islam is Madonna. Her new album and single, entitled "American Life," to be released in April, are pointedly anti-war.



RAY OF LIGHT: Madonna's new single features a "pro-peace" message.

George Bush you're looking like Zoolander / Trying to play tough for the camera / What am I on crazy pills? We've got to stop it / Get your hand out my grandma's pocket / We need health care more than going to war / You think it's democracy they're fighting for?

"In a World Gone Mad"
The Beastie Boys

Madonna is renowned for her skill at making videos that anger conservatives; the "American Life" video is a fashion show turned into a war zone. Madonna was said to be "retooling" the video after the war started, supposedly taking out the more gruesome imagery of dead Iraqis.

Another eighties artist taking a chance on

an anti-war tune is John Mellencamp. His new song "To Washington" may not be getting as much airplay as "R.O.C.K. in the U.S.A.," but this "hero of middle American values" wrote a song whose lyrics include, "What is the thought process to take a human's life? What would be the reason to think that this is right?"

Hip-hop is also contributing to the anti-war song list. The Beastie Boys, no strangers to political action having spent years working on the Tibet cause, have a new tune in which Saddam Hussein and George W. "kick back" with some cocaine and some booze.

Of course, there are the "new" Lee Greenwoods. The odious Toby Keith has his stirring anthem "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue." And Darryl Worley, almost as famous as Madonna, is storming the country charts with his "Have You Forgotten?" which tries to link Saddam to September 11, something the Bush administration hasn't forgotten to do.

There have been repercussions for artists who have spoken out on stage or in song. The Dixie Chicks, in a concert in London, spoke out against Bush, which caused several stations around the country to ban their music. And Steve Earle got a lot of flack for his song "John Walker's Blues," about American Taliban soldier John Walker Lindh.

As for the old school protest songs, they aren't getting much airplay nowadays. Clear Channel had its infamous "list" after September 11 of songs not to play, which included John Lennon's "Imagine" and, for reasons unbeknown to the sane, The Bangles "Walk Like An Egyptian."



...AND IN THE MEDIA

*Corporate journalists:
don't ask, we won't tell*

BY CHRIS ANDERSON

As war rages in Iraq, a second battle is also underway—a media war that could determine the ultimate success of the “new” Gulf War. More than ever, the Pentagon is pinning its hopes on its public relations campaign.

By March 23, media images of the war began to diverge from the reality on the ground as U.S. casualties mounted. Reports changed hourly as the situation shifted. To a careful reader, the malleability of basic “news” became clear.

Over the course of the war, how will the Pentagon and its pals try to shape media coverage? The military’s several strategies for controlling the flow of war-related information are bolstered by corporate-controlled media outlets, as well as by journalists.

In-Bedded With the US Military

Following a tightly scripted first Gulf War and a virtual news blackout of operations in Afghanistan, senior military planners have done an about-face. Some six hundred journalists from major news outlets are now “embedded” with U.S. combat units in the gulf, having attended a well-publicized “media boot camp” and trained alongside U.S. Army and Marine units that they would cover in the event of a war.

The *American Journalism Review* speculated whether “spending weeks eating, sleeping and moving with the same soldiers might instill an ‘I am one of them’ attitude, eroding impartiality.”

Bill Schiller, editor of the *Toronto Star*, was more blunt: “If anyone thinks that the Pentagon is engaging in this embedding project for any other reason than to help improve its image before the U.S. public,

they are being incredibly naive.”

Initial analysis of the first days of war coverage has borne out the Pentagon’s fondest hopes. “TV reporters showed great restraint, often telling anchors they would not reveal their location,” said *Cincinnati Post* media critics. “They had clearly become cheerleaders for their units, which was what the Pentagon hoped would happen.”

Hand Up From the Corporate Press

In the run-up to war, the corporate media gave the hawks a lift. According to a study released by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), conducted between January 30 and February 12, “more than two-thirds (267 out of 393) of the guests featured [on ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News and PBS’s NewsHour] were from the United States. Of the U.S. guests, a striking 75 percent (199) were either current or former government or military officials.”

Perhaps the most blatant offender is radio powerhouse Clear Channel, which has sponsored pro-war rallies of up to 20,000 people across the country. Although a Clear

Channel spokesman claimed that there was no “corporate directive” to encourage rallies, Federal Communications Commissioner Glen Robinson said with some amazement that the activity “sounds like borderline manufacturing of the news.”

Clear Channel also played a role in an incident at an Ani DiFranco concert at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC). Democracy Now host Amy Goodman says that she and DiFranco were explicitly forbidden to distribute anti-war literature at the Clear Channel sponsored concert on March 19. “It is house policy that no political literature of any kind can be distributed at NJPAC,” said Shelly Roberts, director of NJPAC. “The audience comes here to hear music, not necessarily to be politicized.”

Between “embedded” journalists, TV shows that choke with retired 4-star Generals dispensing “straight talk” about war, and the corporate media’s desire to “protect” its listeners from alternative voices, access to accurate images from the invasion of Iraq may be weeks, months, or even years away.

Lies our administration told us: a guide to government misinformation

The burden of proof is on the Bush Administration to justify the bombing of Iraq. But amid the scaremongering, half-truths, non-truths and blatant lies, hard evidence has been sorely lacking. Some of what they’ve said to muddle our brains:

1. Unmanned Crop Dusters: In his Oct. 7 speech in Cincinnati, George W. Bush warned that Iraq was developing “a growing fleet” of unmanned aerial vehicles to disperse chemical and biological weapons and was exploring ways to target the United States. Instead, reporters in Iraq found vintage Wright Brothers-era biplanes that could barely get off the ground.

2. Iraq’s Nukes: By all accounts, they’ve got nothing. Mohamed El Baradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told the U.N. Security Council that letters purportedly showing that Iraq tried to buy uranium from Niger were fabricated.

3. Nation Building: We will “liberate” Iraq as we did Afghanistan. However, there is no security outside the capital of Kabul. The warlords have taken over again and reportedly many Afghani women say they preferred the Taliban, who if nothing else kept the violence in check.

4. The Dossier: During a dramatic Feb. 5 presentation at the United Nations, the Secretary of State Colin Powell cited a British “intelligence report” as additional proof of Iraqi non-compliance with Security Council Resolution 1441, stating, “I would call my colleagues’ attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed... which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities.”

It took reporters just 24 hours to unveil the dossier deception. Much of the 19-page paper was cut and pasted, typos and all, from three outdated articles, one of which was written by an American graduate student based on information gathered at the end of the first Gulf War.

5. Code Yellow. Code Orange. No, Yellow. No, wait, Orange. The see-saw terror alerts have put the nation on edge continuously since the week preceding the massive Feb. 15 anti-war protests.

6. Get the Duct Tape: After consumers raided Home Depot, studies revealed that a person sealed in an average-sized room would asphyxiate in about four hours. Curiously enough, the GOP received more than \$100,000 in the 2000 election cycle from Jack Kahl, whose Ohio-based company manufactured 46 percent of the duct tape in this country last year. After the warnings, the company saw “a doubling and tripling of our sales,” CEO John Kahl told CNBC in February.

Compiled by Katherine A. Carlson, Emily Reinhardt & John Tarleton.





Solidarity activist killed in Gaza

F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

Peace activists around the world mourned last week as they learned of the tragic death of one of their own.

The death of American activist Rachel Corrie in occupied Palestine, on the eve of the U.S. onslaught in Iraq, illuminates the enormous peril now faced by activists as they struggle to resist an Israeli government that seems willing to use the cover of war in Iraq to ramp up its own military actions.

Corrie, 23, was in the Rafah area of the Gaza Strip as a member of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which is devoted to protecting Palestinians from attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

On the day of her murder, March 16, Corrie wore a bright orange jacket and spoke through a bullhorn as she stood between an Israeli military bulldozer and the Palestinian home it was moving to demolish. ISM volunteers say they had confronted other Israeli soldiers and vehicles throughout the day, thus giving ample warning of their presence in the area.

Moreover, eyewitnesses said and photographs of the incident made clear that the driver had an unobstructed view of her standing in front of the bulldozer. Nonetheless, the driver pushed forward and subsequently rolled over Corrie, crushing her between its weight and a pile of rubble.

"Many people in Palestine fear that [Corrie's death] was an attempt to drive internationals out of the area and that Ariel Sharon is trying to enact massive changes under cover of war with Iraq," says Mark Lance, a philosophy professor at Georgetown University. He is an organizer for the Sustain Campaign, which works to end U.S. government funding for Israel. "Chasing away international observers would definitely make sense in that context."

Her death comes at a time when fellow ISM activists have noted an increase in violence against international volunteers in the region.

"We certainly noticed everyday Israeli military violence against Palestinians and unarmed civilians, but there had been a level of restraint in violence against internationals," says Huwaida Arraf, a spokeswoman for ISM. "However, more recently we've noticed an escalation of violence against internationals. We interpret it as a concerted effort to break international solidarity—especially since we plan to intensify our efforts during the war in Iraq."

While Israel's military described the

incident as a "very regrettable accident," they have done little to express that regret.

To the contrary, Israeli forces demonstrated the extent of their antagonism when they fired teargas and stun grenades at mourners attending a memorial service for Corrie. Later during the service, the same bulldozer that ran over Corrie was spotted passing through the area.

A Congressman from Corrie's home state of Washington, Rep. Brian Baird, called on the U.S. State Department to investigate the matter.

"We're certainly not going to see an independent investigation by Israel," says Arraf. "There's no excuse not to have an investigation when an American citizen is killed by a foreign government."

Regardless of whether an investigation takes place, activists say the tragedy has strengthened their resolve while simultaneously drawing extensive media publicity to an issue often overlooked by the mainstream press.

"The impact of Rachel's death will serve to galvanize people. Her death is a call to arms," says Angela Bukowy of New York, an ISM activist who has worked throughout Gaza. "People who never had interest in our activities, like the media—who are often blind to what happens to Palestinians—are now asking what happened."

In the short time since Corrie's death, the Israeli military attacked another U.S. volunteer, this time in the West Bank city of Nablus. On March 20, 21-year-old Eric Williams Howanietz was treated for multiple wounds after Israeli troops hit him with four rubber-encased steel bullets.

Meanwhile, the violence against Palestinians also continues. The Israeli military killed nine people in Gaza, including a four-year-old girl, less than 24 hours after Corrie's death. The action was the fourth major Israeli incursion into Gaza in the past three weeks, prompting further accusations that the Jewish state is exploiting the world's preoccupation with Iraq to intensify its offensive against Palestinians.

More than 2,000 Palestinians have been killed since the outbreak of fighting following the collapse of U.S.-brokered peace talks over two years ago. According to Defence for Children International, 384 Palestinian children have been killed by Israeli forces from September 29, 2000, through the end of 2002.

To learn more about the International Solidarity Movement go to www.palsolidarity.org

RESPONSES TO

A wave of protest has swept around the world since the United States launched its invasion of Iraq.

NATIONAL

New York City, March 20-22 — 5,000 demonstrators converge on Times Sq. on the war's first day, despite a driving rainstorm. Two days later, more than 250,000 protesters march from 42nd street to Washington Square Park. Protesters scuffle with riot and mounted police during and after the march resulting in almost 100 arrests.

San Francisco, March 20-22 — 75,000 people march, marking the Bay Area's third day of protests with over 2,000 arrests in total. Breakaway marches last late into the night.

Boston, March 20 — Area college and high school students walk out at noon. By late afternoon, several thousand demonstrators had blocked the Mass. Ave. Bridge and the bridge over Back Bay.

Pittsburgh, March 20 — 122 people are arrested as hundreds of anti-war demonstrators disobey police orders to stay on the sidewalk and pour into the streets of downtown Pittsburgh at rush hour.

Chicago, March 20 — Following a massive convergence at Chicago's Federal Plaza, an estimated 10,000-15,000 protesters pour into the streets and surge onto Lake Shore Drive, effectively closing one of the city's major arteries. Over 800 are arrested with police apparently singling out organizers and youth for arrest.

Austin, TX, March 20 — Students from the University of Texas and area high schools walk out of class to protest the start of the war. More than 1,000 blockade the intersection of 24th and Guadalupe effectively shutting down traffic for four hours near the university.

Vermont, March 20-22 — On the day the war begins, Vermonters march to the state capital in Montpelier. In downtown Burlington on the 22nd, over 5,000 raucous protesters fill several blocks. Marchers loop through the streets between bookend rallies at City Hall and Battery Parks. In Brattleboro the same day, about 1,100 people march downtown.

Atlanta, March 22 — Saturday's rally in Five Points bypasses the planned destination of Centennial Park and heads straight for CNN headquarters. The estimated 2,000 protesters then proceed to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution for another impromptu protest.

Hollywood, March 22-23 — As many as 20,000 protesters flooded Hollywood's streets on Saturday and marched on CNN. A night later at the Oscars, several thousand protesters welcomed the stars, instead

of the usual excited fans in the bleachers. Inside, Michael Moore's "Bowling for Columbine" won Best Documentary and the filmmaker denounced the president on national TV. "We live in a time when we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons. We are against this war Mr. Bush. Shame on you! Shame on you!"

Washington DC, March 22 — Hundreds of protesters continue daily marches and civil disobedience.

Seattle, March 22 — More than 1,200 rally at the Federal Building.

INTERNATIONAL

South Africa, March 21 — In Cape Town, 8,000 students and workers from nearby factories take to the streets to protest the war on Iraq. About 200 people also gather downtown at the U.S. consulate, setting up a 24-hour picket with shifts of 50 people.

Brazil, March 22 — In the capital of Brasilia, hundreds from the Landless Movement protest at the U.S. Embassy. Later that day, church groups, Brazil's bar association and non-governmental organizations hold a demonstration and candlelight vigil in front of the nation's Congress building. Anti-war protests take place in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere on the 21st.

Middle East, March 20-22 — In the bloodiest protest yet, police clash with thousands of demonstrators trying to storm the U.S. Embassy in Yemen's capital on the 21st, leaving a police officer and protester dead amid a barrage of bullets, rocks, water cannons and tear gas canisters.

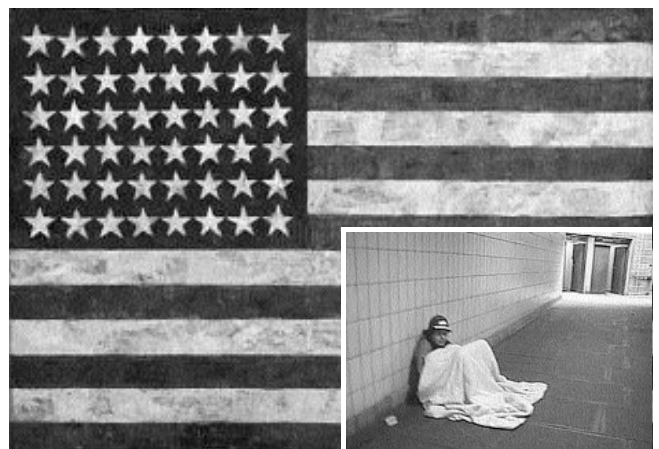
Riot police fired rubber bullets at a smaller crowd in Bahrain, while water cannons and tear gas were used in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

Thousands gather in Taksim Square in Istanbul on March 20 to protest the bombing. Along with various political organizations, many unaligned protesters and passers-by join the demonstration.

Bangladesh — Witnesses said 6,000 teachers, students and staff from Dhaka University marched in the capital and burned Bush in effigy. Earlier, hundreds of Islamic militants gathered before the city's main mosque, shouting anti-U.S. slogans and facing down rings of riot police.

Seoul, North Korea — Buddhist monks struck giant drums at a Seoul rally of 2,000 to console the spirits of victims of the war.

Greece, March 22 — Farmers, union organizers, anti-corporate globalization activists and feminists turn out behind "Men above Profits" banners and anti-war placards in Athens. This follows two days of demonstrations that draw more than 150,000 each.



THE START OF WAR

FIRST PERSON

Why am I still protesting?

By DV BERNARD

I wonder now if I ever truly believed that my protests could stop this war. I wonder about it in the same way that we as adults often wonder if we ever truly believed in the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus. I've had days to think about it: the initial stupor that gripped me Wednesday night, when the first bombs began to light up the Baghdad skyline, has subsided somewhat. The urge to seep into apathy has been beaten back—probably not by any great passion, but by a lingering sense of duty towards something within myself. Now that I think about it, I went to Saturday's protest march the same way one goes through with a blind date with someone one doesn't find attractive. Yet, two hours after returning from the protest march I'm still perplexed by the fact that I came home in a good mood. Certainly nothing has changed to engender these good spirits. Bush hasn't decided to "bring the troops home" (as I saw several signs demanding); bombs are still falling on the people of Iraq; people on both sides of the conflict are still dying needlessly... and I just heard on the news that some U.S. officers were wounded when a grenade was thrown into their tent.

Why am I still protesting—especially now that the war has started and the patriotic urge to "support the troops" has mitigated whatever nascent anti-war feelings had been spreading throughout the country? The question here seems to be why do I fight that which has already occurred. However, it's not that simple. We have all been fighting against the inevitable these past few months. Now that I think about it, the protest movement probably grew as quickly as it did because we all knew that once the invasion of Iraq began our chance of victory (of curtailing what we in our hearts felt to be a great new evil) would be over. We were warriors against the inevitable, some of us well aware that even Bush's going to the U.N. was only his way of making war fait accompli; his way of listening to voices of opposition drowned out all voices but his own; his way of seeing was impervious to what others tried to show him—just as rainbows are only streaks of gray to a colorblind man.

Why am I still protesting? It seems to me that who we are as human beings usually comes down to three things: what we say, what we do and what we believe. To the extent that we live good lives—that is, lives unnecessarily complicated by internal hypocrisy and self-deception—there is usually consonance between those three things. What we believe is manifested in what we say and in what we do. However, like Bush we are probably all victims of limited vision: we all see the world based on a few facts of our choosing. Thus, at this time when all the mainstream forces around us are telling us to accept what has happened, it behooves us either to figure out how our sight betrayed us or (just as critically) how we can keep from going blind.

Why am I still protesting? I protest because protesting is like art: if one is true to an ideal then one doesn't pursue it merely because of what one thinks one will get in return (or how others will view it), but because one believes it is right.

Finally, I am still protesting because I'm tired of having to accept as inevitable that which the constitution tells me I have a choice about. Now that war has begun all the president's supporters are saying, "Hey, you didn't get your way, but be a good sport about it and quiet down so that the country can go about its business."

Those of us with good memories will remember that that was the same argument that Bush's proponents made after the rigged results of the 2000 election.



LOCK DOWN: Protestors have repeatedly shut down major intersections in San Francisco. PHOTO: JULIAN CASH (ABOVE) SFMC (BELOW)

Spain, March 22 — Players from European soccer powerhouse FC Barcelona don anti-war T-shirts and display a banner calling for peace before their weekly league game.

Many of the 100,000 spectators packing the Camp Nou stadium in Madrid stand and applaud as the players walk around the playing field holding up the banner reading: "Barca for peace."

The gesture comes a day after more than 1 million people demonstrated throughout Spain calling for an end to the war. In Barcelona alone, a half million people take to the streets.

Italy — A pro-peace farmers' rally in Rome drew an estimated 300,000. Other cities holding protests against the government's pro-U.S. stance included Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Palermo and Turin.

England, March 22 — Tens of thousands of anti-war protesters march in central London to denounce Prime Minister Tony Blair's government. The



protest includes marches and a rally in Hyde Park. Several thousand gathered outside Fairford air base in western England where American B-52 bombers

attacking Baghdad are stationed.

Compiled from Indymedia sites (www.indymedia.org) by Jeanne Strole and Katherine A. Carlson.

Flags: what are they good for?

By CHARLOTTE ALDEBRON

The American flag stands for the fact that cloth can be very important. It is against the law to let the flag touch the ground or to leave the flag flying when the weather is bad. The flag has to be treated with respect. You can tell just how important this cloth is because when you compare it to people, it gets much better treatment. Nobody cares if a homeless person touches the ground. A homeless person can lie all over the ground all night long without anyone picking him up, folding him neatly and sheltering him from the rain.

School children have to pledge loyalty to this piece of cloth every morning. No one

has to pledge loyalty to justice and equality and human decency. No one has to promise that people will get a fair wage, or enough food to eat, or affordable medicine, or clean water, or air free of harmful chemicals. But we all have to promise to love a rectangle of red, white, and blue cloth.

Betsy Ross would be quite surprised to see how successful her creation has become. But Thomas Jefferson would be disappointed to see how little of the flag's real meaning remains.

Charlotte Aldebron, 12, wrote this essay for a competition in her 6th grade English class. She attends Cunningham Middle School in Presque Isle, Maine.

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PHOTO: RED ASKEY

UN DEMOTED TO BUSH LEAGUE

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—The future of the United Nations moved to the top of the agenda here in mid-March.

Had the U.N. become a relic of the mid-20th century, a second failed venture into international cooperation, joining the League of Nations which had passed into history with the outbreak of World War II?

The bombers were over Baghdad.

Observers concluded that nothing would deter the Bush administration from acting to achieve its objectives, no matter how misconceived and brutal those objectives might be and regardless of the resistance they encountered.

They speculated that one of the administration's objectives is the destruction of the U.N., the permanent invalidation of its Charter, whose purpose was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security..."

Top Pentagon advisor Richard Perle captured the administration's view in a piece in the London *Guardian* headlined "Thank God for the death of the UN."

In the past two years, unilateralism had become emblazoned on the administration's

coat of arms.

Choosing to go it alone, it had pulled out of the Kyoto protocol on climate change; withdrawn from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; turned loose the Sharon government and put the brakes on Israel-Palestine negotiations; kept hands off

Africa's wars, food shortages and health crises; and



declined to ease the economic

problems of debt-ridden, poverty-stricken developing countries.

Finally, it challenged the U.N. If the Security Council failed to adopt U.S.-sponsored resolutions on Iraq, it would be found "irrelevant."

That is what it had come down to.

The Bush administration double- and triple-talked the question.

The Declaration for Iraq issued March 16

in the Azores by the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain said they planned to work "in close partnership with international institutions, including the United Nations."

Moreover, they would seek the adoption of new Security Council resolutions.

Russian President Vladimir V. Putin castigated the United States "Nothing can justify the military action," Putin said, "neither accusations of Iraq supporting international terrorism (we have never had and do not have information of this kind) nor the desire to change the political regime in that country which is in direct contradiction to international law.

"If we allow international law to be replaced by 'the law of the fist,' no one, not a single country in the world, will feel secure," he warned.

French President

Jacques Chirac stated that his country would not support any Security Council resolution aimed at installing a U.N. administration in Iraq. "That would justify the war after the event," Chirac said.

He seemed to be attempting with that statement to preserve a measure of U.N. integrity and international straight thinking.

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan displayed his usual calm and equanimity. "The Security Council is going to have a role to play," Annan said. "The U.N. has an important role to play in the post-conflict Iraq, and the Council will have to discuss that."

How that point of view would square with Chirac's position would be decided in the international brawl yet to come. Not to

mention the Bush administration has announced that private corporations such as Halliburton (which still pays Dick Cheney, its former CEO and the current Vice President, up to \$1 million annually) and Bechtel (which helped Iraq build its chemical weapons arsenal in the 1980s) would play the major role—not the U.N.—in rebuilding post-war Iraq.

Some recalled that Adolf Hitler had been very direct in his dealings with the League of Nations. On October 14, 1933, Hitler abruptly withdrew Germany from the League. In the succeeding years, alarms of war and wars swept Europe, Africa, and the Far East. General war broke out in Europe on Sept. 1, 1939.

The League shut down. A number of parties wrote its obituary. Carl Hambro of Norway, a League official, mourned:

"If we allow international law to be replaced by 'the law of the fist,' no one will feel secure."

"Should a time ever come when the Palais of the League of Nations is left as a derelict monument to the faded ideals of an age more unsophisticated than ours, any visitor to this place, and any person of any of our nations reflecting on the history of the present and the past, would certainly feel that at night the empty corridors were full of forms of fear, that this place was haunted by the ghosts of forlorn hopes and unfulfilled aspirations."

Hitler had announced his intentions all along in *Mein Kampf*, and in his speeches and radio broadcasts. Was it possible that Bush and his associates were more devious, more duplicitous, but just as insane as the Nazi leader and his legions?

BY EMILY FREEBURG & KARA PICCIRILLI

What many people didn't know as they watched the Security Council proceedings on CNN during the first two weeks of March was that a thousand women from around the world were meeting two floors below at the 47th annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Forty-five government delegations and women from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) met for two weeks in New York to discuss and create "Agreed Conclusions" on two themes from the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, authored at the 4th World Conference on Women. On the agenda were Women's Human Rights and Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls; and Participation and Access of Women to the Media, and Information and Communication Technologies.

Fully aware of the male-dominated diplomatic play upstairs, NGO representatives referred to the war on Iraq in many of the conversations about this year's themes. Women from war-torn countries pointed out that the obsession with the war on Iraq has overshadowed the urgency to resolve the thirty-plus ongoing armed conflicts worldwide.

In the conversations on the elimination

A HOUSE DIVIDED

At the UN, women push for peace while men debate war

of violence against women, NGO representatives maintained that war is the greatest violence against women because they bear a disproportionate impact from it. Two-hundred-sixteen of them signed the statement "Women Say 'Yes' To Disarmament by Peaceful Means" that was sent to all Security Council members. In another letter distributed to the press, NGO representatives articulated the disproportionate impact of war on women in a collective statement, "Women Say 'No' to War". The two statements, as well as the statement made by the European Women's Lobby, called on the United Nations and member states to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), which mandates women's involvement in peace negotiations and



decision-making processes in conflict resolution.

The connections between violence against women and armed conflict were made at the Commission, but it avoided drawing the conclusion that state-sponsored armed conflict is a form of violence against women.

Perhaps more discouraging

than the Commission's symbolic language on violence against women was the lack of media coverage and the absence of journalists and media practitioners in the proceedings specifically dealing with women's participation in and access to media. One of the few journalists in

attendance at the Commission, Ellen Snortland of the *Pasadena Weekly*, said, "I'm appalled, and have been appalled since [the Women's World Conference in] Beijing by the lack of media coverage." Another journalist, Mavic Cabrera-Belleza, said, "Mainstream media and mass media are not here because they don't see the value of connecting with civil society and intergovernmental organizations like the UN."

Since the media were absent at the Commission and were instead stationed upstairs to watch the men of the Security Council, it is once again up to NGOs to spread the word. This year NGO representatives took home a two-part irony. The Commission considered media policy, but aside from a few random journalists, mainstream media did not participate in the discussion. Meanwhile, women from around the world worked together to push the Commission to develop strong language preventing violence against women, while upstairs men pushed for language to go to war.



WHITHER PAX AMERICANA?

By SANJAY KUMAR

The conquest of Iraq, by any measure, is the most audacious—and reviled—gun-slugging oil grab in history. The initial targets of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” include the seizure of oil and gas fields, pipelines, pumping stations and refineries.

The Pentagon admitted it accelerated the invasion to try to pre-empt Iraq from torching its oil fields. After all, if they go up in flames, how can the Iraqis pay for the benefit of being bombed into freedom?

Despite howls of protest to the contrary, oil is central to the war. It takes fossil fuel to power the tanks, ships and planes dropping the bombs. The U.S. military machine uses about 2 million barrels of oil a day (and that’s in peacetime), which is about what India—a nation of over 1 billion people—also consumes. During wartime, the thirst is even harder to slake. The Army’s 3rd Infantry Division, which is charging across the Iraqi desert, is by itself being tended to by a fleet of 350 fuel tankers hauling nearly 2 millions gallons of gas.

Yet, the war is not just about the freedom to SUV on over to Starbucks for a latte. It’s also about reordering the Middle East.

A Rand Corporation analyst who briefed the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board last July, at the behest of board chairman Richard Perle, called Iraq the “tactical pivot,” Saudi Arabia the “strategic pivot” and Egypt “the prize.” Bringing Saudi Arabia to heel—whose enormous reserves have earned it the moniker “the global central bank of oil”—would give the United States a stranglehold on the global economy’s lifeblood.

Egypt, however, has just a few drops of oil. But it does have a large population and military, a history of Pan-Arab nationalism and Islamic radicalism, and a position atop one of the world’s commercial chokepoints, the Suez Canal.

Then there is the White House’s unspoken agenda of shocking and awing the world into submission.

Robert Fisk, writing on March 22 from a burning Baghdad, notes the “message of last night’s raid was the same as... all the raids in the hours to come: that the United States must be obeyed. That the EU, UN, NATO—nothing—must stand in its way.

Indeed can stand in its way.”

Perle made that point explicit in the first days of the war. Writing in the London Guardian under the headline “Thank God for the death of the U.N.,” he calls the body an “abject failure.” Perle is particularly incensed at “handing great moral and even existential politico-military decisions” to the likes of “China or Russia or France or a gaggle of minor dictatorships.”

The post-Cold War policy of unilateralism and pre-emption was originally outlined by current Pentagon super-hawk Paul Wolfowitz during the first Bush presidency. A decade later, Junior’s precision-guided triumphalism extends to endorsing nuclear first strikes against potential rivals like Russia and China, as called for in last year’s Nuclear Posture Review.

The official thinking, however, is more sophisticated than mere big-stick swagger. Thomas P.M. Barnett, an adviser to Donald Rumsfeld and a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, sees the defining issue as globalization. Writing in the March issue of *Esquire*, Barnett argues that since the end of the Cold War the Marines have tended to wade ashore in areas where “a country is either losing out to globalization or rejecting much of the content flows associated with its advance”—like Somalia, Afghanistan, Haiti and Yugoslavia.

Running through current trouble spots, Barnett lists “the Caribbean Rim, virtually all of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and much of Southeast Asia.” Barnett adds possible trouble spots, including India, China, Russia and almost all of South America.

So for empire’s overseers, all but North America, Europe and Japan are potential future battlegrounds. Yet even the Pentagon can’t take on the whole world. In essence, the United States is encountering classic limits to power.

The waves of protest reverberating around the world represent the largest outburst of dissent in human history. The United States has zero legitimacy in the global streets and can strongarm little more support in the U.N. Who could have imagined that Turkey would deny the entry of U.S. ground forces or that France, Germany and Russia would display public unity in rejecting the U.S. war

push?

Rejected by popular and international opinion, the U.S. can only rely on its awesome hammer to bludgeon the wayward into line. Even then, it picks fights with 98-pound weaklings. That’s why, to the White House, Iraq—with a military budget under \$2 billion compared to the Pentagon’s \$400 billion—is a threat and a nuclear-armed North Korea is not.

In addition, the White House can ill afford thousands of American casualties. Increasingly, it can’t afford the financial cost of a sustained war. No one wants to pick up the tab this time. And with the growth of satellite television and the web, images of burnt and blown-up civilians further turn world opinion against the United States.

Pax Americana won’t disappear overnight. In the modern era, empires don’t so much fall to the barbarians as they are supplanted slowly by a new hegemon—as the Dutch did to the Spanish in the 17th century, the British to the Dutch in the 18th century, and the Americans to the Brits in the 20th century. This time, however, the U.S. has to contend with a new type of superpower: world public opinion.

TOP 10:

How have we prepared for the war on Iraq, America?

10. Renaming “French Kiss” to “Sick-Your-Tongue-Down-the-Throat Kiss”
9. Hoarding yellow ribbons
8. Filling swimming pool with gasoline
7. Throwing out those half-eaten, three-month-old containers of hummus in the back of the fridge
6. Switching from Osama to Saddam toilet paper
5. Using the Hummer to drive to the mailbox
4. Pre-positioning strategic reserves of salty snack foods around the living room
3. Answering all the kids’ questions about the Middle East by explaining the difference between a Patriot and a Scud missile
2. Sealing the pets in plastic sheeting and duct tape
1. Cracking jokes about “Sodom-mizing Hussein”

Bush regime tries to evade reach of new International Criminal Court

By CATRIONA STUART

Despite the marked absence of the United States, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was officially inaugurated in March, ringing in what many hope is a new era of justice for war criminals. Yet, as the bombs continue to destroy Baghdad and protesters take to the streets across the globe in dissent, the questions of the legality of the U.S. attack and whether the ICC will play a role is being pondered.

According to its charter, the Court holds jurisdiction only over crimes committed on the soil of an ICC member state or by a national of a member state. As neither the U.S. nor Iraq is party to the agreement, it is widely held that the ICC cannot prosecute American citizens for any war crimes committed in Iraq.

Michael Ratner, an international human rights lawyer and president of the Center for Constitutional Rights disagrees. In a recent report, he states “the Court also has jurisdiction over crimes carried out on the territory of a State which is a Party.” As an example, he cites the U.S. use of British-ruled Diego Garcia, located in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. is using the small island to load warplanes with bombs and missiles that are now pummeling Iraq. In such a case, Ratner asserts, the ICC could legally take up issues of war crimes.

Ratner has been joined in his calls for war crimes inquiries by lawyers from Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom as well as by the International Committee of Jurists, which calls the U.S. aggression “a flagrant violation of the prohibition of the use of force.”

Heather Hamilton of the World Federalist Association points out, however, that “the ICC rests on complementarity. The ICC would only step in when a government either would not, or could not provide a fair trial... as both the U.S. and U.K. have functioning legal systems, we would not expect to see such a case before the ICC.”

Despite these assurances of the supremacy of national law, Bush has relentlessly attempted to undermine the court since he entered office. In addition to nullifying the ICC agreement signed under Clinton, Bush ensured the passage of the U.S. Servicemembers’ Protection Act in 2002, and threatened to veto the U.N. mission in East Timor unless U.S. personnel were granted immunity.

Now, the U.S. is on a campaign to ink bilateral deals with signatory nations that agree that neither country will bring the other’s current or former military, government or other personnel before the ICC. Thus far, more than 20 countries have signed such agreements with the United States, whose goal is to render all Americans immune from prosecution by the ICC. Legal scholars point out that these agreements violate both the letter and spirit of the Charter.

Similar to the tactics used to create the “coalition of the coerced,” the United States is reportedly threatening nations with aid cuts if they refuse to sign. “This strong-arming is symptomatic of the erosion of U.S. influence abroad,” says Hamilton.

Indeed, this erosion could spell disaster for the United States in the aftermath of war on Iraq. Still in its formative stages, the ICC is not expected to be able to try cases until 2004. In the meantime, ICC supporters are pushing for an ad-hoc international tribunal. They say the Court could probably try Hussein only for crimes committed after the ICC’s inception in July 2002. And they harbor fears that the U.S. may opt for a military trial.

“The Administration has put itself in a very bad position to try Hussein... if Bush decides to set up a military tribunal, it would fly, but would have zero legitimacy in the international community,” one source said.

EL INDEPENDIENTE



Ahora Irak... y mañana?

En Irak, en la cuna de la civilización, donde hace seis mil años los sumerios crearon la escritura, hoy caen los misiles y las bombas con mayor capacidad destructiva del mundo. Estados Unidos a pesar de la oposición de las Naciones Unidas y de la mayoría de los gobiernos de América Latina, Asia y África, ha lanzado una "guerra preventiva" contra Irak. Esta agresión militar implica el total desconocimiento del derecho internacional y pone en peligro la existencia misma de la humanidad. Irak, el segundo país en riqueza petrolera en el mundo, lleva sufriendo más de una década de embargo económico, impuesto por EE.UU. y apoyado por las Naciones Unidas después de la aventura militarista de Saddam Hussein en Kuwait. La invasión de Irak, sumada a la guerra de exterminio de los palestinos por parte de Israel, están encendiendo un polvorín en el Medio Oriente. La prensa ya ha comenzado a celebrar los éxitos militares de la invasión a Irak. Sin embargo, es muy difícil prever las consecuencias que tendrá esta agresión apocalíptica. Alrededor del mundo, crece la percepción de que esta es una guerra imperialista, de conquista. Desde el lanzamiento del ataque no han cesado las manifestaciones masivas contra la guerra en EE.UU. y en el mundo.



Invasión en Irak: Ilegal, Injusta e Innecesaria

Felipe Pérez roque,
Ministro de Relaciones
Exteriores de Cuba Ane la
Comisión de Derechos
Humanos

Ginebra, 20 de marzo (fragmento)

La ilegal, injusta e innecesaria agresión contra Irak, un país del Tercer Mundo —desatada ya con toda brutalidad pese al unánime rechazo de la opinión pública mundial— convierte el derecho a la libre determinación y la soberanía de los pueblos en un simple espejismo. Después de tal guerra, habrá surgido un nuevo orden mundial en el que nuestra antigua aspiración a que el planeta estuviese regido por el imperio de la ley habrá sido aplastada por la imposición de un orden regido por la ley del imperio.

Ni siquiera los antiguos aliados en la OTAN, que durante décadas acompañaron a los Estados Unidos durante la Guerra Fría, escapan ahora a la amenaza de agresión militar. [...] Las consecuencias de continuas agresiones al derecho internacional, insólitas declaraciones y doctrinas, y el constante empleo de la amenaza y el chantaje militar que hemos visto en el último año, están todavía por comprenderse en todo su alcance y trascendencia. Todo un planeta ha quedado convertido en rehén de las caprichosas decisiones de un poder ilimitado que desconoce cualquier compromiso internacional y decide sólo según sus propios intereses y su peculiar con-

cepción de la seguridad nacional.

No estamos solos, y somos además la mayoría. Contamos también con el apoyo decisivo de sectores crecientes del propio pueblo norteamericano, de cuyos sentimientos idealistas y justos, cuando conoce la verdad, el pueblo cubano tiene pruebas. ¿No resultan realmente alentadoras las enormes movilizaciones que en todo el planeta se oponen hoy a una guerra innecesaria e injustificable contra Irak, como siguen oponiéndose a la imposición del modelo neoliberal en un mundo globalizado que empobrece a nuestros países y les impide soñar con el desarrollo?

Activista por la paz

Cuéntanos quién eres y qué haces.

Me llamo Alexis Forcada, soy mexicano y pertenezco al grupo "Escudos humanos". Estoy en Amán, Jordania, llegué ayer desde Bagdad, Irak. Al principio de mi permanencia en Irak, se veía gente por las calles, niños que iban a la escuela, actividad, parecía el ojo del huracán. Pero desde el domingo pasado todo cambió. La gente no tiene a dónde ir. Desde que el 13 de febrero de 1991 los Estados Unidos bombardearon el refugio de Bagdad donde murieron 408 mujeres y niños, la gente no quiere ir a los refugios. Mucha gente salía de Bagdad (ciudad de 5 millones de habitantes) para irse a las provincias. Pero no se van de su país. Se quedan a defenderlo.

¿Cuál es el propósito de la organización Escudos Humanos?

En este mundo globalizado hemos decidido formar un ejército por la paz. Hay que evitar que se derrame más sangre. Los escudos nos paramos frente a las plantas de agua potable, plantas eléctricas, depósitos de comida. Pero no podemos detener las bombas. Lo único que podemos hacer es tratar de evitar que la guerra empiece. Desgraciadamente, no tenemos 20 mil o más personas ni contamos con personalidades. Los escudos humanos venimos de más de 33 países.

Nos sentimos mal por irnos de Bagdad pero quedaron algunos escudos y otros activistas quedaron, como los españoles de las Brigadas de Solidaridad. Ellos se turnan por región, esta semana están los vascos...

Cuéntanos qué piensan los iraquíes de esta guerra.

Los iraquíes saben que es una guerra por el petróleo, que Bush hijo quiere terminar lo iniciado por el padre. Los norteamericanos son unos cobardes que bombardean desde lejos.

Para la gente de Irak este es un ataque contra el país y van a resistir con lo que puedan, hasta con los puños. Va a ser una masacre en la va a morir mucha gente. Va a haber ataques suicidas. Se va a luchar casa por casa.

Brasil, Indymedia, 20 de marzo de 2003. Transcripción de El Independiente.

Latinoamericanos y españoles —al igual que otros ciudadanos del mundo— salieron a las calles masivamente el sábado 22 de marzo para repudiar la guerra contra Irak.

España: En Madrid, un millón de personas, según el Foro Social, protestaban contra la guerra de manera pacífica cuando la policía empezó a disparar balas de goma. El centro de Madrid se convirtió en un campo de batalla. También hubo manifestaciones multitudinarias en Barcelona, Bilbao, Valencia, Sevilla y otras ciudades españolas. Entre las consignas más coreadas se destaca: "No nos representan", en repudio al gobierno de España que apoya a Estados Unidos en contra de la opinión de la mayoría de los españoles.

México: (Uno de los dos países latinoamericanos miembros no permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU que se negó a apoyar a EE.UU.) En la Ciudad de México, organizaciones no gubernamentales y grupos de estudiantes convocaron a una concentración frente a la embajada de Estados Unidos para protestar por la guerra. La manifestación pacífica fue brutalmente reprimida por la policía con gases lacrimógenos.

Brasil: En Brasilia, cientos de activistas del Movimiento de los Sin Tierra protestaron frente a la embajada de Estados Unidos.

Ecuador: En Quito, se concentraron cientos de jóvenes para lanzar "un grito gigante contra la masacre, mal llamada guerra". También manifestaron un enérgico rechazo a las políticas neoliberales. Había pancartas expresando "NO al Plan Colombia". Abundaron las consignas contra el ALCA, Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas. Algunos manifestantes sobre zancos tenían trajes de pájaros simbolizando libertad y justicia social, en Ecuador y el mundo.

Argentina: Se realizaron marchas de protesta contra los símbolos del poder anglosajón. En Rosario se protestó frente a McDonalds. En Córdoba se hicieron "escraches" al Banco de Boston y al Lloyd's. En Buenos Aires, miles de personas protestaron frente a la embajada de Estados Unidos. La policía usó gases, balas de goma y camiones hidrantes para reprimir a los manifestantes, algunos de los cuales se defendieron lanzando piedras.

Estados Unidos: En Nueva York, entre los cientos de miles (más de medio millón según El Independiente) que se congregaron para repudiar la guerra se contaban latinos de diferentes organizaciones: Se Hace Camino al Andar, Abye Ayala, Centro de Trabajadores Latinos, Campaña de Solidaridad con Vieques y otros.